

Testimony of Marc Anthony Gallucci

Appropriations Committee – Human Services

March 4, 2011

RE: Funding for Centers for Independent Living & Bill 1012 – BESB and CDHI

Good Evening:

I am here in my capacity as Executive Director of Center for Disability Rights at 764 A Campbell Avenue in West Haven. I am here to support funding for Centers for Independent Living and to urge you to not approve any changes in the status of BESB or CDHI until certain principles have been met.

First CIL funding: I know well the difficulty of finding ways to balance our State budget. And we are all in this together. However budget cuts should not be done unless they truly will help solve the problem. Cutting CILs, which basically have the same dollar amounts that they have had since 1989, and which have been cut several times including in the last budget will not shrink the deficit and may, in fact, make it larger. Indeed, this budget will likely undermine the CILs ability to save the State money through preventing institutionalization and reducing the number of folks in nursing homes.

Second, BESB and CDHI: We all are in favor of reducing administrative costs and combining services so that consumers do not have to go to multiple places to get the help they need. However, we are not sure that this bill does this. In fact, in the

case of BESB, this budget would go against the current trend toward no wrong door or single point of entry by splitting BESB and making folks who are blind go to two separate agencies.

In the case of CDHI, we feel that the bill makes no guarantee that the same level or better of services will be offered when CDHI is in DSS. In fact, there is nothing in the bill to prevent cuts in CDHI services.

So, our recommendation is that the budget proposals be scrutinized to see if they adhere to the following principles:

- 1) That CILs, BESB, and CDHI have a very real consumer control and direction character to them to ensure that there is a watchdog to make sure that those services do not disappear, be diminished, or get lost in the shuffle;
- 2) That as much as possible, no wrong door or single point of entry is established for these services and they not be split up into many pieces scattered to the wind; and finally,
- 3) That the services be community based or local so that folks do not need to go to Hartford for basic services.

We do not think the present budget and Bill 1012 meet these principles in their current form.

Thank You:

Marc Anthony Gallucci, Esq.
Executive Director
Center for Disability Rights
764A Campbell Avenue
West Haven, CT. 06516
203-934-7077 marcanthony@centerforDisabilityRights-CT.org